

TORPOINT
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORTS

OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
AND
Surveyor.

1914.

SYDNEY G. VINTER,

D.P.H., M.R.C.S., Eng., L.R.C.P., Lond.
Medical Officer of Health.

ROLAND H. BEAUMONT,

Assoc. M. I. C. E.
Surveyor and Inspector.

—TO THE—

Torpoint Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report on your District for 1914; the war made it an exceptional one in some respects from a public health point of view.

The M.O.H. on mobilization was appointed Medical Officer in charge of troops in Torpoint; troops were in the district from the outbreak of hostilities till the end of February, and he wishes to take this opportunity of thanking various public bodies for the help he received.

The Urban District Council, and especially their Surveyor, Mr. R. H. Beaumont, A.M.I.C.E., he wishes to thank for their ready assistance at all times, and their willingness to listen to and to appreciate his difficulties under exceptional circumstances.

The St. Germans Guardians, one of whose medical officers he is, he wishes to thank for placing their Isolation Hospital, with 20 beds, at his disposal as a temporary Military hospital; this was especially valuable at the outset, when local accommodation was restricted.

He also wishes to thank the Western Counties Manure Co. for the provision of an excellent bath, for the use of the troops, a lead settlement tank 10-ft. 4-in. square and 3-ft. 6-in deep, which they kept supplied with hot water for the purpose.

The following are the various points about which I am directed by the Local Government Board to report.

(A) NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

The population which at the census of 1911 was 4,283 is now estimated at 4,589.

The area of 1,324 acres may be divided for descriptive purposes into three parts.

(1) $1,134\frac{3}{4}$ acres which are still rural, with a population of about 50.

(2) $143\frac{1}{4}$ acres which belong to the Naval establishment at Trevol; this is at present rural in character, and is used principally as a drill ground for men and boys; it has, however, large sheds which are being used in war time as sick quarters. Its number of residents is not estimated for in my report.

(3) 46 acres which are urban in character, and which accommodate the bulk of the population, the remaining 4,539. Of these 46 acres, 20 acres were built over more than 20 years ago, the remaining 26 acres having been covered since that time, principally between the years 1900 and 1910. The population is almost wholly either naval, or of the artizan and labouring classes employed in Devonport Dockyard. At the present time there are 537 serving in the Navy, 82 serving in the Army, including those lost in action, &c., total 619.

The number employed in the Dockyard, and other Government establishments is 356, making a total of 975 in Government employ. There is also a considerable number of pensioners from these three employments.

The total number of Paupers relieved during the half-year ended Lady-day, 1915, was 28 indoor and 72 outdoor, total 100, giving a pauper rate of 21·8 per 1,000 inhabitants.

(B) SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water Supply. This is derived from a catchment area fed by various superficial springs and situated at Crafhole some 6 miles distant. This supply was inaugurated 1886 and the analytical results after filtration are satisfactory, as is shewn by the subjoined report from the Clinical Research Society. Its position, below the level of the village at Crafhole, has necessitated an arrangement which the St. Germans Rural District have undertaken to carry out, and which was approved after enquiry by the Local Government Board, whereby the effluent from the two septic tanks of the village will be carried past the catchment area.

			Parts per 100,000		Grains per Gallon
Total Solids (dried at 120° C.)	...	...	31·5	...	22·1
Combined Chlorine	...	...	5·00	...	3·50
Equivalent to Na. Cl.	...	...	8·25	...	5·78
Nitric Nitrogen	...	...	0·36	...	0·25
Nitrous Nitrogen	...	...	nil	...	nil
Ammoniacal Nitrogen	...	...	nil	...	nil
Albumenoid Nitrogen	...	...	0·0025	...	0·0018
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hours at 27° C.	...	...	0·022	...	0·015
Lead or Copper	...	...	nil	...	nil
Temporary hardness (equivalent to Ca. Co ³)	...	...	17·0	...	11·9
Permanent hardness	...	...	3·2	...	2·2
Total hardness	...	...	20·2	...	14·1

Though there has been no curtailment of supply, the Torpoint Council are fully convinced of the unsuitability of the supply owing to its inadequacy in volume and pressure, and are only awaiting a suitable opportunity to carry out an adequate scheme.

Drainage and Sewerage. The only work undertaken in this respect during the past year was the enlarging of the outfall sewer at Muxey Rock; this is nearing completion.

Housing. The Surveyor, who is the Inspecting Officer under Article II of the Housing Regulations, 1910, and myself made monthly inspection of houses, street by street, until the declaration of war; it was then considered that it would be better to discontinue it for the present. The Surveyor's monthly Report Book brings to the notice of the Sanitary Committee any pressing cases. As a matter of fact all the older part of the town and much of the new has been inspected once or more.

There is no unoccupied house in the district. 4 houses were built during the year, 1 of a villa character, the other 3 were artisans' dwellings. The question of housing accommodation is becoming a difficult one, persons who have to leave a house for any reason being unable in many cases to find another.

The following are the particulars furnished under Act XX (16) of the Local Government Board's General Order, 1910.

(a) The number of inspections made by the Sanitary Inspector during the year was 58.

(b) The number of statutory notices served during the year was 2, there were also 50 informal notices, 52 in all.

(c) The number of houses in which defects have so far been remedied is 32.

No closing order was applied for.

Schools. The County Council have decided to build a school to take the place of the Wesleyan School which is considered by the Education Authority to be overcrowded and inconvenient. This, like other building work, is necessarily postponed; in the meantime it is as well managed as it can be under the circumstances. The existing County Council Schools are commodious and well kept.

(C) SANITARY ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISTRICT.

1. Staff: The Surveyor, Mr. R. H. Beaumont, A.M.I.C.E., who is also Sanitary Inspector.

2. There is no hospital accommodation available for infectious diseases except that provided by the St. Germans Guardians for cases occurring in the Workhouse, or in some rare cases for paupers outside. Cases occur from time to time in which great hardship and loss is entailed upon others than the affected family, living in the same house.

It is understood that the County Council have a scheme for grouping neighbouring districts into hospital areas, which is no doubt the right solution of the difficulty.

3. The Public Health Acts' Amendment Act of 1890 is in force in the district, also that of 1907, except sections 39, 42, 67 and Part VI.

4. To the Clinical Research Society 34 specimens were sent with the following results:—

For diphtheria, 26 specimens, reaction positive in 9, negative in 17.

For tubercle bacillus, 6 specimens, reaction positive in 3, negative in 3.

For typhoid, 1 specimen, positive 1.

One sample of well water was also sent and the well found to be contaminated.

(D) PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The incidences of the chief notifiable diseases were as follows:

TORPOINT.			CORNWALL.			ENGLAND & WALES.		
		Rate per 1000			Rate per 1000			Rate per 1000
Total number.		of population.	Total number.		of population.	Total number.		of population.
Scarlet Fever ...	10	2.39	...	1,440	4.37	...	165,045	4.47
Diphtheria ...	18	3.92	...	549	1.67	...	59,357	1.61
Enteric Fever ...	4	0.87	...	101	0.31	...	8,778	0.24
Erysipelas ...	5	1.19	...	142	0.43	...	26,977	0.73

It is remarkable that in three of the four cases of typhoid there was a history of eating cockles, in the fourth case there was a doubtful history to the same effect. The cockles are gathered on the mud at such places as the St. John's Creek and sold principally in Plymouth. These cockles have been examined and found to contain the bacillus coli; it is known, therefore, that they are contaminated by sewage, and only await the typhoid bacillus from a suitable case in the sewage to become a far reaching source of infection. Your Medical Officer is communicating with the M.O.H. for St. Germans, the other authority in whose district the creek is, to see in what way this can be prevented.

(E) PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER
TUBERCULOSIS.

During the year 9 cases of tuberculosis were notified, of these 4 were pulmonary and in 5 the disease occurred in other parts, principally one of the larger joints. One of the pulmonary cases went through the County Insurance Committee to Didworthy Sanatorium.

(F) INVESTIGATION OF OTHER DISEASES.

There was no other occurrence of disease calling for special comment, and no closure of schools was needed.

There were no deaths of infants from diarrhoea or enteritis. With regard to vaccination, of the 104 children born during the year there were :

Successfully vaccinated	...	...	...	67
Conscientious objections	...	...	...	31
Died before vaccination	...	...	...	3
Postponed by Medical Certificates	...	...	...	3
				<hr/> 104

(G) MEANS FOR PREVENTING MORTALITY IN
CHILDBIRTH AND IN INFANCY.

The local Nursing Association continues to do most valuable work by the provision of two nurses, one for maternity and one for general work. The maternity nurse has since been appointed teacher at the Child Welfare Centre at Cardiff, and has been replaced by another nurse here.

The number of deaths of infants under one year of age, 5, was the lowest recorded ; the numbers for the preceding five years being 7, 8, 9, 10 and 9 respectively.

(H) VITAL STATISTICS OF THE DISTRICT.

The total number of births 104, giving a rate of 22·66, is the lowest recorded in the district. The number of births in 1906 was 136 and this before the building of a considerable number of houses in the area. It bears out only too well the remarks of the Principal Medical Officer to the Local Government Board on the Country's birth rate, "Between 1876-80 and 1912 the Registrar General states that the fall in the birth rate, calculated on the total population, has amounted to 33 per cent." The birth rate for England and Wales was 23·9 per 1,000, or 0·1 per 1,000 more than the rate of the preceding year.

The importance of this subject on our national life and existence is now especially brought home to us.

The year was a healthy one and the nett deaths at all ages belonging to the district were 47, giving a death rate of 10·24 which was lower than any year since 1909. The rate for England and Wales was 13·7 per 1,000 of population.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

SYDNEY G. VINTER,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman & Members of the Standing Committees.

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in reporting upon the work carried out during the year by your various Committees as follows:—

Highways. Considerable work has again been carried out by your Committee, with the result that the main thoroughfares of the Town will now compare very favorably with a town of a similar size and character. Not only have the streets in the urban part of the District been well maintained but those in the rural portions are in an equally good condition. The continued use of tar asphalt pavings is making it possible to reform many more of the footpaths than would have been the case had a more expensive form of construction been adopted. The tar spraying carried out again this year has been very beneficial, and one is struck with the great demand there is for this means of ensuring the comfort of being able to have open windows for the access of fresh air, even in the roads that are so much used by fast traffic. The traffic over the road from the ferry outward has, owing to the war, been of a very exceptional character, being larger

in volume and being in many cases very heavy, and, owing to the very wet back end, the roads in question have been very badly cut up, but some hopes are held out that the Government will come to the aid of the County and Local Authorities, in order to repair the surfaces, where it can be conclusively shewn that the damage has been caused by war traffic. At the present time negotiations to this end are proceeding with the County Council.

During the year your Committee carried out a much needed improvement at the junctions of Antony, North, Harvey, and Rowe streets. The footpaths were all reconstructed and the carriageway lowered and reformed, and in connection with this improvement the road in front of the Post Office was similarly treated; the result has been a decided improvement in the gradients and in the appearance of this particular neighbourhood. The lane between Harvey street and Rowe street has been reconstructed with a good foundation and tar macadam surface, with sett gutter down the centre and is much cleaner than before. A further length of footpath was constructed in Antony road, from Buller road to Sconner road, and when the front of Grosvenor terrace is similarly paved this road will present a very good appearance. A good deal of private street work was put in hand during this year including the footpath in the Northern side of Antony road also the making up of North road, Liscawn road, Vicarage road, Barrossa road and Salamanca road. These works are now well in hand, but have been very seriously delayed owing to the shortage of labour and the great difficulty experienced in obtaining materials. Sconner road has been made up by the Antony Estate upon plans and specification approved by your Council and the road finally taken over and the surface tar sprayed.

The Globe well opposite Carlton Villas has been opened up during the year, and it was found that a good supply of water can be obtained from it for the purpose of street watering.

Sanitary. Considerable work was again carried out by this Committee under the Housing and Town Planning Act, though it was decided to cease making new orders after the outbreak of the war, having in view the fact that practically the whole of the old area had been inspected and that many of the notices were outstanding or had only been complied with in part. 58 houses were inspected and of this number 52 were found to require attention in some particular, of this number 32 houses were improved in whole or part. During the year your Committee undertook the reconstruction of the outfall sewer to Muxey rock and it was originally intended to relay the existing 12-in. C.I. pipes to a much better gradient, but as the work progressed it was evident that the pipes were not large enough to carry the volume of sewage coming from the drainage area of this particular outfall, and the Committee decided to duplicate the iron pipes and to lay an 18-in. stoneware pipe between the iron pipes and the point of junction at the manhole. Naturally the work proceeded very slowly as the outfall is at lowest water level, but the end of the year saw nearly all the pipes laid and the early summer will be a favorable time for reconstructing the two manholes; this improvement will no doubt have the effect of preventing much of the flooding of premises adjoining Union road.

During the year your Committee took steps in regard to the provision of a mortuary, and it was decided to use a corner of the store in Ferry street for the purpose with the result that the Town is now equipped with a very desirable mortuary, which provides for a long felt want.

With regard to sanitary matters 50 informal notices were served, and two formal, 84 nuisances were abated and the number of cases, including complaints coming under my notice, was 124 including choked and defective drains, W.C's., defects in dwelling houses, etc.

Lighting. The question of the mode of lighting the streets was again very much under discussion and preparations were made for the proposal for the use of electricity. The lighting by gas presented no unusual features, only the ordinary maintenance being proceeded with in anticipation of the change of system. The Military order during the latter part of the year caused the removal of the whole of the incandescent burners, which were replaced in every case by flat flame fittings and it was only needed to see the effect of the change to appreciate the boon of the improved burners.

Water. The question of Craftthole village was again under serious consideration and the neighbouring Local Authority have been taking steps to formulate a scheme to obviate the difficulty, and the matter is receiving the attention of the Local Government Board. The supply to the consumers was continuous throughout the year, though economy had to be exercised towards the end of the Autumn.

Complaints are still received as to the shortage of supply to the upper levels of the town, and particularly does this affect the sanitary arrangements of these areas.

During the year 400 washers were provided and fixed for consumers' fittings.

There was an extension of main at the rear of Chapeldown terrace, a 3-in. pipe being laid. Six new connections were made during the year—two for Admiralty Establishments, two for new houses, one to replace a pump supply and one to the new conveniences provided by the Ferry Proprietors. Also during the year 13 new flush tanks to waterclosets were fixed.

Finally I beg to thank the members of the various Committees for their assistance they have rendered through a trying year, also to wish to acknowledge the loyalty of my staff in carrying out the many and varied undertakings.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ROLAND H. BEAUMONT,

Assoc : M. Inst. C.E., M. Inst. M. & Cy. E.

